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ABSTRACT

This document traces the history of and need for global education. The paper examines a crucial connection between global education and critical thinking. Students cannot acquire a global perspective without developing critical thinking skills. Similarly, they cannot be considered critical thinkers without a global perspective. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the challenge has become for teachers to abandon their bipolar assumptions and get students ready for a multipolar world. A new world view is needed. The global education movement can serve as a model for an educational system that will prepare students for life in a much different world than the one of their parents. Global education developed out of 2 emerging global realities: (1) all humans are part of a complex web of world institutions, whether as consumers, workers, or investors; and (2) humanity is increasingly threatened by problems that cannot be solved at the national level. The perspective and method of critical thinking offers important help, first and foremost, because the process systematically encourages a student to be extremely careful about his or her world view and background beliefs. Critical thinking forces values to the surface of consciousness and makes students think about the way they are thinking. Not teaching the mere tolerance of other cultures, but teaching a far more humble and modest view of the country's place in the world, and encouraging the notion of authentic and equal partnership in a global community is urged. (DK)

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"The Not So Odd Couple: Critical Thinking and Global Education "

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"The Not So Odd Couple: Critical Thinking and Global Education"

My plan this afternoon is to begin with a structured presentation to lay the groundwork for an open discussion, which I'll leave plenty of time for later. Essentially, what I intend to do is trace the history of and need for global education, and examine what I see as a crucial connection between Global Ed and critical thinking. Helping students acquire a global perspective, it seems to me, simply can not occur without at the same time encouraging and enabling them to be critical thinkers. By the same token, for reasons I hope to make plain, students can't really be considered critical thinkers without a global perspective.

If my basic premise is correct, it follows that a session such as this has everything to do with the theme of the conference this year, which is "Cultivating the Reasoning Mind." Can a person truly be considered reasonable In the absence of a world view that can accommodate concerns larger than those of one's own immediate culture? I happen to think not, but we can argue the point later.

I suppose one of the most vivid memories of my childhood was a huge Boy Scout campout in a pine forest on the Monterey Peninsula where I was raised. This would have been in the early 1950s.

Boy Scout troops from all over the region were at this particular Jamboree, and it was quite an affair with several hundreds of little para-militarists running around performing good deeds and single-mindedly trying to identify the local flora and fauna.

In any event, my memory centers on the final night's huge campfire. All of us gathered around the fire to hear ghost stories, roast marshmallows and receive various awards for our scouting skills which, in my case, if I remember correctly, consisted largely of being able to carve a small wooden boat without causing serious harm to myself or others.

At the height of the evening's festivities, there suddenly arose a huge commotion over the treeline which obscured Monterey's deep water bay from our vision. We couldn't see anything except flashes of light, but we could hear incredibly loud explosions. I should remind you at this point in my story that Fort Ord, a major army training installation, is located on the East Side of Monterey bay.

What I remember most about that dark night is simply what all of us children immediately assumed. And what we assumed was that the Russians had finally sailed into Monterey Bay to attack Fort Ord and that the Third World War had begun. As you might imagine, this was a sobering thought indeed. Even more sobering was the sight of so many young and thoroughly frightened young boys armed with newly sharpened Scouting knives waiting for the first Red to come out of the woods. Incidentally, as we eventually learned, the flashes of light and explosions were nothing more than fireworks from an annual religious festival for the local fishing fleet.

I suspect that many of you may have similar kinds of memories of Cold War scares and of the numbing tension and sense of perpetual anxiety that for more than 40 years characterized the confrontation between East and West. Quite simply, the threat of communism--real or imagined--has been behind practically every national emergency in which the United States has found itself involved since World War II beginning with the Berlin airlift of 1948 right up to Grenada, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Such graphic memories make the events of the past three or so years all the more stunning. What was once our arch nemesis and rival for world power, the USSR, is now broken into squabbling region-states. These remnants are reduced to holding what amounts to rummage sales to unload space exploration and military equipment, and their people are forced to accept leftover American field rations from the Persian Gulf War.

Instead of the once-feared and mighty Soviet Union, there now exists something called the Commonwealth of Independent States--or **C.I.S.**

As one of my students had occasion to ask: Does this mean instead of Commies we ought to now call them **CISSIES?**"

Whatever we choose to call the former Soviets, the Cold War is over and we have been it is time to adopt a radically new world view. The challenge now is for all of us who have been long laboring under bi-polar assumptions to get our students ready for a multi-polar world. In other words, we need a new world view, and I think we need it badly.

Fortunately, if we are truly interested in pursuing an educational system that will prepare students for life in a much different world than the one of their parents, we don't have to start from scratch. There is a model available, one that's been around at least since the 1970s. I'm referring, of course, to the global education movement.

As many of you will know, global education has a relatively short history, and was born in the late sixties out of two emerging global realities. The first was the realization that all humans are part of a complex web of world institutions, whether as consumers, workers, or investors. The second realization was that humanity is increasingly threatened by problems that simply cannot be solved at the national level. There will either be an **international** solution for these problems---or there will be no solution at all. Such problems include acid rain, pollution of ground and surface waters, poisons in the atmosphere, climactic changes because of the greenhouse effect, starvation, the Third World debt crisis, international terrorism, the nuclear threat and so on. (Knieb, 1985, p. 17)

Despite its considerable promise, the global education movement--at least in the United States--has never really gained momentum sufficient to the task of imbuing most of our students with a truly authentic concern for their interconnectedness with the rest of the world. Certainly, it has not equipped them with the skills or knowledge necessary to transcend what I can only describe as a rampant *cultural narcissism.*

The evidence that at least American students are not particularly well prepared for the new age upon us seems overwhelming to me. Consider for instance a survey of student knowledge of world geography conducted three years ago on behalf of the National Geographic Society.
Random samples in nine nations, including the U.S. and, for the first time, the former Soviet Union, were asked to identify 16 places on a world map. U.S. youngsters came in last. (Grosvenor, 1989)

I think that just as troubling as student ignorance of specific information is their seeming lack of even general awareness of matters global. Take for example the results of probably the most ambitious study ever done of American college student awareness of global issues. The survey was carried out in the early 1980s by the Council of Learning in cooperation with the Educational Testing Service.

The survey consisted of test items clustered around 13 global issues ranging from environment and food production to energy issues and war and armaments. The mean score out of a possible hundred and one was 41.9 for freshmen students and 50.5 for seniors. The authors of the study concluded that the patterns of response indicated that American college students lack a global perspective in the sense of a context for viewing their own nation's actions and problems. In other words, it's as if these students thought they lived on this planet pretty much in splendid isolation.

Such an attitude is particularly unfortunate when, as environmentalist Paul Ehrlich has pointed out, one American does 20 to 100 times more damage to the planet than a single person existing in the Third world. (Bradley-Steck, 1990)

Perhaps the most dismaying finding in the Council of Learning study was the performance of education majors on the test. The average senior education major obtained a score of 39.8 correct out of 101 items. This was the lowest score recorded by any discipline or major. According to one observer, "This poor performance is especially disturbing, since education majors will be the teachers of global understanding to the elementary and secondary school students of tomorrow." (Torney-Purta, 1982, p. 203)

The reasons why global education has not really prospered in the United States are complex and many, but I think they have their roots in the Cold War just recently ended. For 40 or more years, students and their teachers alike have been encouraged to accept a bi-polar model for understanding the world, a model that portrayed world affairs almost wholly within the framework of U.S.-Soviet relations. However, by definition, a bi-polar model is not a global one. That is to say, such a model simply does not allow for the delineation, the complexity, the richness of a multi-polar world, a world in which there are many competing cultural, political and economic claims.

For some forty years, then, we have been encouraged to view world politics as a singles tennis match rather than the rather intricate soccer game that it is. Given these circumstances, global education, with its emphasis on a multi-faceted view of the world and its challenge to a narrow and parochial national perspective could not prevail.

At the same time, our students were encouraged, implicitly and explicitly, to believe that they were citizens of the only actor-state that really mattered on the world stage. True, they were told, the Soviets had a major role as a villain; but the rest of the world, particularly the developing countries, had only walk-on parts.

Is it any wonder, when you stop to think of it, that many of my students over the years haven't felt the need to study a foreign language, or to learn where other countries are located on a map, or to concern themselves with global environmental issues. "Let others learn about us" seems to be their attitude. This is what I meant earlier when I said we have been affected by rampant cultural narcissism in our institutions and ourselves.

At this point, let me turn to the connections I see between critical thinking and global education.

At least for me, critical thinking, at a minimum, INVOLVES BOTH PERSPECTIVE AND METHOD; A WAY OF THINKING AND A WAY OF DOING THINGS. Put another way, a Perspective is a way of seeing and approaching something, while method is being able to do something about it. You may have a perspective that values equality among people, for instance, but you also have to have ways of going about achieving it.

It is precisely because critical thinking involves both perspective and method that it should be consciously and systematically built into courses concerned with global education.

Early on in my work on U.S. foreign policy I ran across what is called political socialization research. Basically, political socialization research deals with children and is interested in discovering how they come to hold the political ideas they do. Very quickly I decided the research wasn't worth much. I mean, what surprise is there in learning that a little Republican or a little Democrat got their party identifications from their parents?

But I remember attending one National Science Foundation seminar on the subject at Stanford early in my teaching career where a piece of research was presented that has intrigued me ever since. This was a cross cultural study that looked at how children in different countries judge their homelands. Essentially, the important question asked was: What is the greatest country in the world? Interestingly, the research showed that the range of response was much greater than you might expect. What I mean is that children did not automatically identify their own country as the greatest. But the one country

where children almost to the level of 100% did so identify their own country was the United States. If I remember correctly, not even English students were so confident as their American cousins.

Certainly, nothing in my teaching or life experience has convinced me that the study was greatly flawed. By and large, my students are convinced in small ways as well as large that they reside in the center of the universe. It is the task of the rest of the world to learn English and learn about us, thank you, not ours to learn about them. Perhaps those of you who live and teach in other countries have had a different experience, and if so, please share it with me during the discussion period. I haven't lived abroad, and so I can't say from first hand experience whether, say, Pakistani youngsters are as chauvinistic as American ones.

But again speaking from my own experience, the most difficult challenge I face, particularly in teaching foreign affairs, is to get my students to reconsider their own assumptions, world view and background beliefs. To be certain, during particular historical periods--the 1960s for instance--it was easier than others. But even then, I found my students who were harshly critical of U.S. behavior in the world and imagined themselves to be challenging mainstream values did so in a wholly American way. As a Pakistani friend of mine once put it during the student uprisings during Vietnam, "Anti-war Students are saying that America will accomplish what no other society in history has managed, and that is to defeat change in the world. If that is not arrogant presumption, I don't know what is. Americans always have to be number one--whether in goodness or evil."

My point here is that global education has no easy task of it if success is measured in the ways we manage to get students to understand the world on anything resembling an even footing. What I mean to suggest is that the perspective and method of critical thinking offers some important help first and foremost because the process systematically encourages a student to be extremely careful about his or her world view and background beliefs. Critical thinking, properly taught, forces values to the surface of consciousness and beyond anything else I've found makes students think about how they are thinking.

From what I've been able to find in the research on global education and its effects--and by the way there is precious little--holding international food fairs, teaching folk dancing, and dressing youngsters up in foreign costumes apparently has little lasting effect when VALUE conflict occurs. That is to say, when push comes to shove--either on the playground between native born and immigrant, or on the world scene between countries. In other words, teaching mere tolerance of other customs is largely ineffective. Think of how you use the word **tolerance** and **tolerate** in everyday language. Students learn to understand these concepts the same way.

What is needed is something more. And that something more is the ability to think routinely and systematically about values, evidence, quality of argument and, most important of all, world view. I think this in part is what Richard Paul means when he calls for the internalization of intellectual standards.

Let me give an example of the type of problem I've faced all my teaching career and which has led me in the direction of critical thinking. Many of my students genuinely believe they are color blind. By this I mean that they believe they judge other humans only on their talents, human qualities, and so forth--and not on their physical characteristics. Many of them have been exposed all of their lives to this professed value, in the classroom and in their homes. Yet years ago I discovered that many of my most decent and caring majority culture students merely tolerated the OTHER, that is, people who were not like them.

To get at the problem, and get them thinking more critically about their world view and how it had been conditioned and shaped, I devised a simple demonstration.

DESCRIBE AND DISCUSS PHOTOGRAPH FLASH CARDS

[Flash cards with pictures of people of varying race and gender are mixed in with pictures of inanimate objects (automobile tires, packages of soap, etc.) and a student is asked to give the first word that comes to mind to identify the content of the picture as the cards are flashed before her/him. I begin by flashing the pictures of *inanimate* objects to get the student into a rhythm of response; when I get to the pictures of human beings, invariably majority culture students identify pictures of Anglos by gender, while they tend to identify pictures of ethnic minorities with such terms as "Black, Negro, Minority, Asian, Mexican and so on. We then hold a class discussion about the implications of "seeing" people differently, depending on visual racial cues.]

My point here is that I had to find a way to get them to open up a consideration of their own racial conditioning. Yet this can't happen, in my judgment, unless they have at their disposal some thinking skills that are used routinely in all of their life situations, not just cross cultural ones, and which allow them to TRANSCEND their own particular experience.

In addition, there are two other reasons in my view why the perspective and strategies of critical thinking are fundamental to global education:

a.) Students need habits of mind that make it more likely they will be able to resist nationalist propaganda and manipulation by either their government, politicians, or interest groups. This is particularly needed during times of international conflict, whether violent or economic. For instance, without something resembling critical thinking skills, many of my students will have difficulty examining the claims of Japan-bashers, no matter how much Sushi they have eaten.

b). critical thinking is absolutely necessary to recognize the process by which information about the world is filtered and processed according to national ideology in everything from textbooks to the mass media. Students who can not recognize shoddy evidence or weak arguments in the public media, or who think seeing CNN is believing stand little chance of emerging from their cocoons of self-absorption and achieving an authentic awareness of their essential oneness with others on this planet.

In this regard, it is essential to impress upon students the distinction between personal bias and collective ideology. Education has worked long and hard to establish a means for identifying and eliminating personal bias from intellectual labor. Whether these efforts have been successful is not my concern here; I am only saying that enormous effort has been put forth to do so.

This pedagogical emphasis teaches us, I think, that in the absence of evidence of blatant **personal bias** in our assertions of truth, there is no cause for concern. But what of a bias that is so widespread, so widely shared throughout a culture that it appears to be no bias at all. It appears merely to be the natural order of things. Such collective bias is the nurturing parent of ethnocentrism.

In this context, consider our assumptions about American-style democracy, or consumerism, or capitalism, or popular culture. I remember one absurd example of this offered some years ago in which an advertising executive argued that we could now consider Brazil a developed country. Why? Because the sales of cosmetics in that country now approaches the per capita expenditures of those in a highly industrialized society. Further proof for this executive was the fact that Brazil had decided to participate in the Miss Universe Pageant.

If what I've said so far makes any sense, where do we go from here? The thing that I think most needs doing is for educators to consciously, deliberately and systematically de-nationalize the curriculum. At least for American school children, I think this means that we need to shift educational paradigms from one that is highly nationalistic and reinforces the notion of Number Oneness, and instead turn to a paradigm that emphasizes global interdependence. I happen to believe that teaching critical thinking, whether in the context of global education or not, inevitably leads in this direction. But that said, I think the ***explicit*** incorporation of critical thinking in courses concerned with the place of Americans in the world will accelerate the process greatly.

A shift of the sort I'm calling for would mean a curriculum that in all ways, at all levels, teaches the interconnectedness of the world: economic, ecological, political, and cultural. In this regard, the consensus among those in the movement seems to be that a global approach ought to focus "on helping students come to perceive the world as a global system and to see themselves as participants in that system." However, before this can occur, schools must provide students with the opportunity to gain background information needed to understand issues throughout the world and help them to develop a values system that promotes an acceptance of ideas, beliefs, values and customs different from their own." (Evans, 1987, p. 547) This is precisely where critical thinking becomes imperative.

Please understand that what I am describing here is not teaching the mere tolerance of other cultures, which too often in my experience education has been content to do. At root, what I am talking about at one level is teaching a far more humble and modest view of our country's place in the world, and at another, encouraging the notion of authentic and equal partnership in a global community.

The task before us is to reconcile loyalty to one's own country with efforts that unite human kind. Along with a number of others, I don't see any reason why the process of teaching students to become world citizens should inhibit their developing pride in their own country, and vice versa. (Evans, 1987, p. 548)

I'm fully aware that what I'm asking for in some ways may involve a major restructuring of our educational systems. All I can say in this regard is that there's been a major restructuring of the world, and--whether we like it or not--nothing less will do.

That said, such a revamping may not be as daunting as it sounds. So far as I can tell, it will not require a heavy infusion of new capital investment. So far as I can tell, it will not require massive shifts in existing funding. What it will require is a commitment of time and, perhaps most important, creative leadership. And in the brief time remaining, let me touch on some developments that give credence to my belief that these goals can be achieved in the real world of tight budgets and pressure groups.

A number of states--but hardly all--have taken at least preliminary steps to globalize the curriculum. New York State, for instance, two or three years ago launched a new program for grades 9 and 10 to teach students how to look at the world with "global eyes." (Sullivan, 1990) Oregon's Board of Education has made a year of Global Studies a requirement for high school graduation. And In Indiana, global education is mandated at the eighth grade level. (Crum, 1982)

For its part, the Southern Governor's Association has called for teaching of geography as a distinct subject in grades K-12, availability of foreign language study in all grades beginning with the first, and, perhaps most important of all, the demonstration of international awareness as a prerequisite for teacher certification. (Weaver, 1988)

And here in California there is the International Studies Project, and a variety of related organizations and programs. As I understand it, there is now even an annual Global Teaching Awards program for Southern California teachers who best meet the challenge of new curriculum demands.

The thrust of California's efforts, I should point out, is not to create a whole new curriculum. Rather, it is aimed at enlarging the capacity of teachers to integrate an international perspective in the subjects and classes they already teach. As the managing director of the California International Studies Project.

Indeed, it's been my experience as a resource person for our local schools that there is always a core of gifted, concerned teachers who very clearly recognize the changed nature of the world and are motivated to change direction in their classrooms accordingly. Often all they need is support and suggestions.

One thing that is absolutely essential is that administrators and teachers alike understand that global education, if it's to succeed, must occur at all levels of instruction. not just at the secondary or college levels. This is vital, if for no other reason that studies indicate that students develop awareness of the concept of interdependence between the ages of five and 10. (Evans, p. 549)

Certainly, based on my own experience, if students aren't open to a global interdependence perspective by the time I get them there's little that college can do for them. Corrective surgery, so to speak, is problematic at best.

At the same time, a global perspective must be incorporated into varied disciplines, and not be left to one or two courses in "world affairs." The research consensus is clear on this: Incorporate a global perspective across the disciplines--or forget it. Despite this need for global ed at all levels and in all disciplines, the reality seems to be that it's left mostly to **secondary** social studies teachers. (Evans, 1987) Indeed, one researcher (Tucker, 1983) found that 90% of teachers of grades 7-12 believe that global education ought to be an important part of the curriculum. But another scholar (Herman, 1983) found that only 20% of elementary school teachers he surveyed thought that Global Education was important for students in grades 1-6. Yet evidence from studies on children's development of the concepts of interdependence and homeland indicate that elementary students are perfectly able to understand concepts of a global nature. (Evans, p. 548).

I suspect one of the explanations why teachers in the lower grades feel global education isn't for their students is simply that they don't feel qualified to teach it. This seems yet another argument in favor of schools of education making a systematic effort to educate their students in global concerns. Give elementary school teachers the methods and content, and there is no reason to believe they won't develop the confidence and competence.

These then are some of the steps that I think might be taken to advance a global education ethic now that the cold war and its effects are receding into the historical middle distance. Yet I note with some irony that precisely at the historic moment when we might begin to establish such an interdependence perspective throughout education there appears to be a new set of stumbling blocks which while not nearly so daunting as those caused by the cold war must be taken into account.

Again, I should readily acknowledge here that my analysis draws heavily on the American scene--and how much relevance my concerns have for your particular situation is problematic. In any event, in no particular order here are some of the problems I see .

First, there is a growing insularity among Americans that may prove difficult for those who are working to incorporate global education into the curriculum. Such an insularity takes many forms, ranging from such political figures as Pat Buchanan, who urge an America First ethic, to chambers of commerce mounting Buy America campaigns. In this latter instance, things can get somewhat confusing, precisely because the world is such an interdependent place today. Officials in a small town in New York state recently voted against buying a Japanese dirt mover, only to learn that the machine was actually made in the United States--while its "American" competitor was really made in Japan.

This New Insularity can also be seen in the willingness to blame others for the problems of the United States. There seems to be an attitude of, "If we won the Cold war, why aren't we having more fun." More to the point, "if we are the most powerful state in the world, why aren't we getting our just deserts." This attitude has some resonance, in my judgment, precisely because the United States is military-rich and social structure-poor, but has yet to fully comprehend the contradiction.

In any event, I sense a growing kind of mean-spirited petulance developing among some Americans which if it persists can only lead to a dangerous mixture that is part ethnocentrism, part fear of economic hard times, part resentment at the seeming success of others. It would not be the first time in American history that nativism found a receptive audience.

There is some reason to believe that the New Insularity is largely the product of the recession and will evaporate when times get better. That said, it happens to be my belief that the U.S. will never return to a period of absolute economic dominance in the world and we will have to get used to permanently lowered expectations. My concern, however, is what happens if we don't make the adjustment?

A related but distinct phenomenon is the disparagement of multi-culturalism that for the past three or so years has been creeping into public debate over education at all levels. Why paying attention to what ethnic minorities and women have to offer should threaten the pillars of the academy escapes me. But many of the voices being heard are quite respectable ones and their argument that multi-culturalism is undercutting sound educational principle has found its proponents. So far this critique has not widened to include global education. It seems to me, however, that Multi-culturalism and global education are branches of the same tree, and you can't lop off one without eventually whacking the other as well.

The final obstacle I'll mention is the crisis in American schools. Wracked by increasingly severe and dangerous problems of the larger society and forced to do so with ever diminishing resources, the schools are skating on the edge of disaster. In my state, several districts are near bankruptcy. Throughout the country, districts are cutting programs and laying off teachers, librarians, nurses, janitors, bus drivers. In a recent national survey of principals, 74 per cent said their budgets had been cut; 40 percent said teachers had been let go. (Schrag, 1992) This, I might add, at a time when the U.S. spent more money in 1990 on purchase of the home Nintendo video entertainment system than it did on books for elementary and high schools. (Sacramento Bee, 1991).

My point is simply this: Just at the moment when we might be able to realize the ideal of global education, resources are being diverted in disturbing ways--and the fight over what is left threatens such an educational concept almost as completely as fallout from the cold war ever did.

Obviously, then, my prognosis for global education is uncertain. But before I end my remarks, I should point out that uncertainty is no stranger to educators and it should not be confused with pessimism. It seems to me that at the end of the day, the matter of global education will be resolved as most other such questions are always resolved--not by politicians, not by school boards, not by budget committees, not by parents, not even by committed administrators--but rather by teachers in the classroom who decide that it is a fundamental responsibility to encourage students to value their humanity and the humanity of others.

A friend of mine told me of an inscription he once saw in a Denver art museum written across the bottom of a canvas by the artist. The inscription read: "When Alexander the Great wept by the river bank because there were no more worlds to conquer, his distress rested on nothing more substantial than the ignorance of his mapmaker." We, of course, are the mapmakers for our students. I think we should take great care not to give them too much to weep about.

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